

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of ~~improving the~~ producing aluminum fuel particles having improved ignitability and burn rate ~~of aluminium fuel particles, characterised in that~~ comprising treating the aluminium aluminum fuel particles ~~are~~ treated with an aqueous solution of hydrofluoric acid and at least one of (i) a fluoride and/or and (ii) a complex fluoride of at least one of an alkali metal and/or and an alkaline earth metal to form a surface layer of a fluoride complex bound to the ~~aluminium~~ aluminum fuel particles.

2. (Currently amended) A The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein an alkaline earth metal ion is added to the aqueous solution in ~~the~~ a final stage of the treatment.

3. (Currently amended) A The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali metal fluoride is selected ~~among~~ from the group consisting of sodium, potassium, rubidium, and cesium fluoride.

4. (Currently amended) A The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the complex fluoride is a hexafluoroaluminate or a hexafluorosilicate.

5. (Currently amended) A The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali metal fluoride is sodium fluoride and the fluoride complex is cryolite.

6. (Currently amended) A The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali metal fluoride is potassium fluoride and the fluoride complex is tripotassium hexafluoroaluminate.

7. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminium~~ Aluminum fuel particles for use in propellant and explosive compositions and pyrotechnic charges, ~~characterised in that the fuel particles have~~ said fuel particles comprising a surface layer of a fluoride complex provided by treatment of ~~aluminium~~ aluminum particles with an aqueous solution of hydrofluoric acid and at least one of (i) a fluoride ~~and/or~~ and (ii) a complex fluoride of at least one of an alkali metal ~~and/or~~ and an alkaline earth metal.

8. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminium~~ The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali

metal fluoride is selected ~~among~~ from the group consisting of sodium, potassium, rubidium, and cesium fluoride.

9. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminium~~ The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the complex fluoride is a hexafluoroaluminate or a hexafluorosilicate.

10. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminium~~ The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali metal fluoride is sodium fluoride and the fluoride complex is cryolite.

11. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminium~~ The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali metal fluoride is potassium fluoride and the fluoride complex is tripotassium hexafluoroaluminate.